



## MAG-26 Commanding Officer's Statement on Suicide Awareness

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Marines, Sailors, and Family Members,

I believe it is true that we cannot do what we do as Marines without the support of our family members and friends. All of you play a significant part in the overall success of the Marine Corps and I consider you part of the MAG-26 family. Because you are such an important part of the MAG-26 team, I need your help in a very important matter.

Unfortunately, suicides have been on the rise in the Marine Corps. Losing one Marine to suicide is unacceptable. Tragically, we lost 52 Marines across the entire Corps to suicide in 2009 and many more in this calendar year. Here is what you as a family member or friend of a MAG-26 Marine can do to help reverse this trend: Learn the suicide warning signs. Take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with some of the warning signs of suicide by using resources like new Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs website:

<http://www.suicideoutreach.org/>

Family members and friends are often the ones that Marines turn to for help in stressful times and most likely will hear and see cries for help first. Encourage your Marine to ask for help or call the MAG-26 duty phone at 910-449-6126 if you are concerned that your Marine is thinking about suicide. I promise you that your Marine will get the help they need, with dignity and professionalism.

There is no shame in asking for help. As Marines, we take pride in never leaving a wounded Marine behind on the battlefield. Today, some are wounded not with physical wounds, but with emotional wounds that lead to suicidal thoughts. When you get involved by contacting us or encouraging your Marine to ask for help, you are making sure that no Marine is left behind.

Thank you for your help, and thank you for your service to our country.

Sincerely,

Col "Scooter" O'Meara  
MAG 26 Commanding Officer